2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
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are not at all anxious that their children should be taught craftsmanship in the mission schools.

In contrast to our customs, education never ends. As the physiological capacities vary, so new activities are undertaken. The culture always provides a place for the aptitudes of every stage of life, and neither men nor women become redundant in their old age, unless, indeed, they are utterly decrepit. With their physical decline, the culture provides new avenues and interests, to which they are continuously adjusting themselves. They suffer no sense of frustration, because their adjustments are dynamic. With us old age may be tragic: among women, the menopause may precipitate a crisis; among men, retiring from work often causes loss of interest in life and mental decay. But old Lovedu men and women always have something more to learn and to do. Women are not perturbed about external signs of age and complacently accept the end of their childbearing years, for these years bring increased influence, a fuller life, and greater rewards. If physical disability excludes old men from active political life, they receive ample compensation in reduced responsibilities and added prestige. There is no sense of impotence that upsets their balance. Instead, the changing sphere of their roles and their interests both keeps them stable and makes them precious to the society. The distress of old age among us is seldom seen, for rewards always stimulate the new adjustments that have to be made. Utter decrepitude is, however, a tragedy, fortunately ended by the neglect that we may regard as pitiless, but which realistically eliminates those who cannot attain even the mediocre level of achievement that the society calls for. He who cannot attain this level cannot make simple adjustments. But he who can still use his faculties in his old age may become a doctor of note, or a recognized authority on tribal legends or history. Finally, the psychological effect of beliefs attaching to the very old is to provide them with new incentives and renewed opportunities. The widespread suspicion that they have personal contacts with the world of darkness enhances their power, while their elevation, in anticipation, to godhood, for they are already so near death that they may be referred to as gods (*midimo*), invests their dignity and their wishes with a supernatural halo.

Beside this all-pervasive system of tribal education, the modern school, with its three R's, is as yet of small importance. It reaches, and only in an attenuated form, no more than 3 to 5 per cent. of the children. Its methods are foreign, divorced from life; its teachers are immature, handicapped by inadequate equipment and by being uprooted from the soil of tribal culture. Yet the modern school is the force of the future. Education is passionately desired by the young, and the old would welcome it if they did not feel that it was subversive. There is no compulsion upon a scholar to become a Christian; but the belief persists that education and Christianity are inseparable. It is a belief that raises an awkward dilemma: must the school, which at the same time is the gateway to Christianity, give up its task of breaking down, or can it compromise with superstition? Can it work from within, integrated into the culture, without defeating its purpose? The answer cannot be given here. The task of the school and the Church is no less prodigious and delicate than

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

RELIGION. In common with the other Bantu tribes of South Africa, the people of the Lowveld have ancestor worship. The form which it takes here bears many resemblances to that found among the Venda and also to that of the Shangana-Tonga though it differs from both in a number of ways. Characteristic of the religion of Lowveld tribes are the predominance of the beer offering to the almost complete exclusion of the blood sacrifice, the use of shrines and dedicated goats or cattle, the powers attributed to old beads and other objects once in the possession of the ancestors, the prominent part played by women, the virtual equality of ancestors on the mother's and father's side and the cult of the *dzimu* in which old men deceive women and the uninitiated by acting the part of ancestors supposed to be returning to the village after certain ceremonies.

The creator-god, to whom however no worship is directed, is known as Khudzwane, use of the term *Modimo* in this sense being in the Lowveld probably a Christian innovation. Belief in a sky-god, such as that of the south-eastern tribes, is absent, while spirits such as the mountain and river spirits believed in by Venda, and Tikoloshe, Impundulu and other half-mythical creatures who play so important a role in the everyday life and beliefs of Pondo and Xhosa are quite unknown in the Lowveld. Instead, one finds the *dzimu* or *davajini*, ancestral spirits who come after sunset after important religious ceremonies in the royal family, during the *tsamaya* drumming, and sometimes, among Lobedu, at the installation of an important headman, and call in thin, wailing voices. Often they whistle out their own names or throw stones at the village, scolding people for having broken customs, till beer is brought to them and they are appeased. They are ancestors, yet they are only half-men with one leg and one arm instead of two;[1] they dwell in the sacred woods, and when they come no one is to leave the village, women and children shutting themselves up securely in their huts. The fact that the part is acted by a few old, trusted men is not known to many.

The sacred place at which offerings are made is not the cattle kraal

[1] Among Venda, *dzidzimi* are thought to be mountain spirits with one leg, one arm, &c., the sight of whom brings death to the traveller. They have no connexion with ancestor worship and are said to be mostly of Sotho origin. This is clearly a borrowing.